

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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a-7  
1. A membership information retrieval server for  
retrieving membership information by accepting at least  
5 one retrieval condition from a group of user terminals,  
comprising:

a storage device for receiving the membership  
information from a group of users and storing the  
membership information therein;

10 a retrieval system that extracts selected membership  
information from the storage device on the basis of the  
at least one retrieval condition sent from one of the user  
terminals; and

a communications system that sends the membership  
15 information extracted by the retrieval system to the user  
terminal from which the at least one retrieval condition  
are sent.

2. The membership information retrieval server as  
20 claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

a determination system that determines whether each  
of the group of the user terminals is currently online,  
wherein

the communications server imports the determination  
25 results into the membership information and then sends the  
membership information to the user terminal.

3. The membership information retrieval server as  
claimed in claim 2, wherein

the membership information includes a user name of  
the member and information entered into and sent from the  
5 user terminal.

4. The membership information retrieval server as  
claimed in claim 2, wherein

the information sent to the retrieval server includes  
10 text information.

5. The membership information retrieval server as  
claimed in claim 2, wherein

membership information stored in the storage device  
15 can be updated whenever necessary from the user terminal  
being online.

6. The membership information retrieval server as  
claimed in claim 1, wherein

the membership information includes a user name of  
20 the member and information entered into and sent from the  
user terminal.

7. The membership information retrieval server as  
25 claimed in claim 6, wherein

the information sent to the retrieval server includes  
text information.

8. The membership information retrieval server as claimed in claim 6, wherein

membership information stored in the storage device  
5 can be updated whenever necessary from the user terminal being online.

9. The membership information retrieval server as claimed in claim 1, wherein

10 the information sent to the retrieval server includes text information.

10. The membership information retrieval server as claimed in claim 1, wherein

15 the at least one retrieval condition include a character string and the retrieval system extracts membership information on the basis of the character string and the text information included in the membership information.

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11. The membership information retrieval server as claimed in claim 9, wherein

the membership information store in the storage device  
can be updated whenever necessary from the user terminal  
25 being online.

12. The membership information retrieval server as

claimed in Claim 1, wherein

the membership information store in the storage device can be updated whenever necessary from the user terminal being online.

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13. A user terminal capable of accessing the membership information retrieval server as claimed in claim 1, comprising:

10 a first sending system that enters at least one retrieval condition and sends the at least one retrieval condition to the retrieval server,

a display that displays the membership information sent from the retrieval server;

15 a creation system that accepts the selection of at least one member from the members in the membership information displayed by the display and creates a temporary user list that includes membership information about at least one selected member;

20 a first acceptance system that accepts entry of message to be sent to a user terminal to be used by at least one member listed in the temporary user list; and

a second sending system that sends the message accepted by the first acceptance system to the user terminal.

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14. A message sending terminal, comprising:

first creation system that creates a first user list

that includes membership information with respect to a group of members;

a second creation system that displays one or more members included in the first user list, accepts the  
5 selection of at least one member from the members in the first user list, and creates a second user list that includes membership information about at least one selected member;

an acceptance system that accepts the entry of a  
10 message from an input system; and

a sending system that sends the message to at least one user terminal to be used by at least one selected member in the second user list.

15 15. A method for sending a message, comprising:

receiving membership information about members sent from a group of user terminals by a server and storing the membership information in a storage device in the server;

20 sending at least one retrieval condition to the server from one of the group of user terminals;

extracting selected membership information from the storage device on the basis of the at least one retrieval condition by the server and sending the extracted membership information to the user terminal that sent the  
25 at least one retrieval condition;

displaying the membership information sent from the server on a display of the user terminal, accepting the

selection of one or more members included in the displayed membership information to create a temporary user list that includes the membership information about the one or more accepted members; and

5        sending a message entered in the user terminal to the one or more members in the created temporary user list.

16. A method for retrieving membership information by accepting at least one retrieval condition from a group  
10 of user terminals, comprising:

receiving membership information about members sent from a group of user terminals and storing the membership information in a storage device in the server;

15 extracting the stored membership information on the basis of the at least one retrieval condition sent from one of the group of the user terminals; and

sending the extracted membership information from the server to the user terminals that sent the at least one retrieval condition.

20 17. The method for retrieving membership information as claimed in claim 16, further comprising:

determining whether each of the group of user terminals is online, wherein

25 the server sends the membership information and the determination results.

18. The method for retrieving membership information as claimed in claim 17, wherein

the membership information includes a user name of the member and the information that is entered into and sent from the user terminals.

19. The method for retrieving membership information as claimed in claim 17, wherein

the sending information includes text information.

20. The method for retrieving membership information as claimed in claim 17, wherein

the membership information to be stored in the storage device can be updated whenever necessary from the user terminal being online.

21. The method for retrieving membership information as claimed in claim 17, wherein

the membership information of the member includes a user name of the member and information that is entered into and sent from the user terminals.

22. The method for retrieving membership information as claimed in claim 21, wherein

the sending information includes text.

23. The method for retrieving membership information as

claimed in claim 21, wherein

the membership information to be stored in the storage device can be updated whenever necessary from the user terminal being online.

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24. The method for retrieving membership information as claimed in claim 17, wherein

the sending information includes text.

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25. The method for retrieving membership information as claimed in claim 24, wherein

the at least one retrieval condition include a character string and the server extracts membership information on the basis of the character string and the text information included in the membership information.

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26. The method for retrieving membership information as claimed in claim 24, wherein

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the membership information to be stored in the storage device can be updated whenever necessary from the user terminal being online.

27. The method for retrieving membership information as claimed in claim 16, wherein

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the membership information of the member includes a user name of the member and information that is entered in the user terminals and sent from the user terminals to



the retrieval server.

28. The method for retrieving membership information as claimed in claim 17, further comprising:

5        sending the at least one retrieval condition entered by the input system to the retrieval server,

         displaying the membership information sent from the retrieval server on a display;

         accepting the selection of at least one member from  
10        the members in the displayed membership information on the display and creating a temporary user list that includes membership information about at least one selected member;

         accepting entry of a message to be sent to a user terminal to be used by at least one member listed in the  
15        temporary user list; and

         sending the accepted message.

29. A method for sending a message, comprising:

         creating a first user list that includes membership  
20        information with respect to a group of members;

         displaying one or more members included in the first created user list, accepting the selection of at least one member from the members in the first user list, creating a second user list that includes membership information  
25        about at least one selected member;

         accepting entry of message from input; and

         sending the accepted message to at least one user

terminal to be used by at least one selected member in the second user list.

30. A recording medium, comprising a readable program  
5 being stored thereof, wherein  
the program is capable of executing:

receiving membership information about members sent  
from a group of user terminals to store in a storage device  
of a server;

10 sending at least one retrieval condition to the server  
from one of the group of user terminals;

extracting selected membership information from the  
storage device on the basis of the at least one retrieval  
condition by the server and sending the extracted  
15 membership information to the user terminal that sent the  
at least one retrieval condition;

displaying the membership information sent from the  
server on displays of the user terminals, accepting  
selection of one or more members included in the displayed  
20 membership information to create a temporary user list that  
includes the membership information about the one or more  
accepted members; and

25 sending a message entered in the user terminal to the  
one or more members in the created temporary user list.

31. A computer program for bring a server into operation  
based on a method that comprises:

receiving membership information about members sent from a group of user terminals to store in a storage device of a server;

5 sending at least one retrieval condition to the server from one of the group of user terminals;

extracting selected membership information from the storage device on the basis of the at least one retrieval condition by the server and sending the extracted membership information to the user terminal that sent the  
10 at least one retrieval condition;

displaying the membership information sent from the server on displays of the user terminals, accepting selection of one or more members included in the displayed membership information to create a temporary user list that  
15 includes the membership information about the one or more accepted members; and

sending a message entered in the user terminal to the one or more members in the created temporary user list.